

AIS OCCURRENCES

Paris Review Editor Gourevitch Visits Ramapo



Photo: Carolyn Herring

Prof. Michael Riff (left) with Philip Gourevitch

MAHWAH – Philip Gourevitch, author of *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families* and, most recently, *Standard Operating Procedure*, a collaboration with the filmmaker Errol Morris, delivered the first William K. Gumpert Memorial Lecture on April 1, 2009. Earlier in the day, he met with a group of students and faculty for a Q&A session that saw a lively exchange of views on variety of subjects ranging from confronting genocide to coming to terms with torture and other human rights abuse by U.S. personnel in the context of combating terrorism and the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Written after the Rwanda genocide, in *We Wish to Inform You* Gourevitch reflects on the meaning of the tragedy through retelling survivors' stories. In *Standard Operating Procedure*, he draws from interviews with the U.S. troops, depicted in the documentary of the same name, involved with prisoner abuse at Baghdad's Abu Ghraib prison.

This issue of *AIS Occurrences* was produced and edited by Professors Roark Atkinson, Risa Gorelick, Jeremy M. Teigen, and Michael Unger.

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AIS FACULTY UPDATES

Dean Hassan M. Nejad will be chairing the panel titled "Concept of Nation in the Middle East" at the International Conference on Change and Stability: State, Religion and Politics in the Modern Middle East and North Africa, May 28-29, 2009 in Krakow, Poland.

Patricia Ard had an article accepted for publication in the *International Journal of the Book*. The article is entitled "Reading Into Things: Literature's Material Culture." She also spoke on the subject of "Anne Frank's Tales From the Secret Annex" for Holocaust Remembrance Day in April of 2009 at the Westwood Public Library.

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New Jersey's Public Liberal Arts College



Photo: Patricia Ard



Prof. Edward Shannon (left) with Tom DeHaven

Tom DeHaven on the “Man of Steel”

By Patricia Ard

On April 9, 2009, novelist Tom DeHaven visited Ramapo College, gave a public lecture, and also led discussions in two Literature classes. DeHaven’s visit was proposed by AIS Literature faculty members Edward Shannon and Patricia Ard and sponsored by the college’s Platinum Series. DeHaven, a professor of Creative Writing and American Studies at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, Virginia, has published numerous novels

such as *Sunburn Lake*, *Jersey Luck*, *Funny Papers*, *Derby Dugan’s Depression Funnies*, and *It’s Superman!* The 2005 Superman novel led Yale University Press to ask DeHaven to write a nonfiction book about Superman for its American Icon series. DeHaven’s public talk, titled “Superman: Our Hero on Earth,” presented material from that soon to be published book about Superman’s history in American culture. DeHaven also showed a dazzling sample of Superman’s evolving imagery and discussed the long and torturous campaign by the “Man of Steel’s” two original creators, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, for artistic and financial recognition.

In his two classroom appearances, DeHaven led a group discussion on the topic of the graphic novel as young adult literature in Ard’s “Children’s and Young Adult Literature” class. In Shannon’s “Contemporary American Novel” course, DeHaven discussed *Funny Papers* with students. DeHaven’s visit represents the continuing work of the AIS faculty to bring intriguing and important speakers in the Humanities fields to campus. □



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Roark Atkinson presented his paper, “Satanic Migrations: The Transmission of Scottish Popular Religion to America, 1750-1830,” for a panel titled “Transcultural Christianity: The Syncretic Dimensions of Early American Religion” at the The Society of Early Americanists’ 6th Biennial Conference in Bermuda, UK.

Lisa Cassidy’s article “Women Shopping, Women Sweatshopping” has been accepted to a forthcoming Wiley-Blackwell

anthology on “Fashion and Philosophy.”

Rosetta D’Angelo presented a scholarly paper at the African-Latin American Conference in Jamaica on the Magic Realism in the writings of Edwidge Danticat. She also gave a talk on Visconti’s cinematography at the Upper Saddle River Library. On March 5th, 2009, she read from her book *Resisting Bodies: Narratives of Italian Partisan Women in Rome, Italy*, at the House of History and Memory by invitation of the Director, Vittorio Cimiotta. The event was covered in the national

media. On March 6th, she presented on her book at the Ministro di Parità e Cultura.

Paul Elovitz published three articles in *Clio’s Psyche*: “The Life Experience and Scholarly Achievement of J. Lee Shneidman,” “Love, Attachment, and Hatred in Long Term Relationships,” and “Psychological Explorations of the Economic Crises.” An article he published last fall was reprinted in the Bulletin of the International Psychohistorical Association and he is a

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AIS CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Student and Faculty Events

AIS Club Events

The **Culture Club** had a number of events during the spring semester highlighting work by several Ramapo College professors as well as those from other institutions. Ramapo College's **Karl Johnson** (African American Studies, SSHS) delivered a talk entitled, "Ethiopia: The Land Historians and Archeologists Forgot," which was sponsored by the African Ancestry Month Committee. **Susan Hangen**

(Anthropology, AIS) delivered her lecture, "Culture, Religion and Politics in Nepal," in March. **Edouard Eloi** (Berry Center) and **Shalom Gorewitz** (Video Art and News Media, CA) presented "Haitian Society: Culture, Religion and Politics" in April. Also in April, **Professor Alain Britt** (English/Creative Writing, Towson University of Maryland) presented "Culture and Society: The Empowerment of Poetry." The Culture Club also organized a dinner celebrating Spanish Peninsular cuisine at Spanish Sangria Restaurant in Newark, which was sponsored by Nancy Mackin, Dean of Student Affairs.

The Literature Club remains active and has continued to run its weekly Workshop Nights. In addition, this past Spring semester Prof. Yvette Kisor, club advisor, ran a weekly Tolkien Reading Group.



Dinner Spanish Peninsular Cuisine at Spanish Sangria Restaurant

Photo: Jonathan Rosenthal

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AIS Student News and Awards

☀ **First AIS Best Essay Contest:** This year our school inaugurated its first Best Essay Contest in the School of American and International Studies. The annual contest recognizes student excellence in the school of AIS and is open to all disciplines and inter-disciplines of AIS. Individual faculty members of AIS nominate student essays written for their courses that demonstrate excellence and all nominated essays are judged by a professor of writing from outside Ramapo College. This April, three winners were honored at our final Unit Council of the year.



From Left to Right: Professors Yvette Kisor and Ronald Hayashida, Dean Nejad, with two Prize Recipients

1st Place: (\$250): Steven Pardalis, "From Separate to Equal: The Legal Revolution of Desegregation in the United States" (nominated by Prof. Hayashida in political science).

2nd Place: (\$150): Kim Rath, "Morality and the Holy Grail" (nominated by Prof. Kisor in literature).

3rd Place: F Michael Stringer (\$50), "Six to Twelve Minutes: Dream Theory and Ontology in Maria Corti's Otranto" (nominated by Prof. D'Angelo in Italian).

☀ Seven Literature students won awards this spring: Katherine Levering won the Helen Burchell Award, Sarah Hildebrant and Jay Everett shared the Prof. Robert Christopher Memorial Scholarship, and Melissa Adamo and Kim Rath shared the Dr. Ernest Simon Book Award. Congratulations!

☀ In June 2009, four Literature students from the Morrison and Woolf Major Authors Course will present papers at the International Virginia Woolf Conference at Fordham University. Tracey Spinato, Gretchen Kaser, Elyse Wunschel, and Kristen Moledo will be on the panel, "An Undergraduate Course Looks at Morrison and Woolf," chaired by Lisa Williams.

☀ Evan Brown, Matt Heitman, and Ravi Gurumurthy, are serving on a student panel at the 2009 Conference of the International Psychohistorical Association at the Fordham University Law School. These three students are presenting their work developed from independent studies with Professor Paul Elovitz.

☀ At the end of April, eleven seniors in the Spanish Language Studies Program presented the research made over the course of the Program Capstone Seminar. The topics ranged from Latina playwrights and the use of Spanglish to bullfights, rainforests, the U.S. embargo toward Cuba, and marketing strategies targeted at Latino communities.

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commentator for “What Makes Europeans European Symposium” based upon the work of Professor Binion of Brandeis University. Currently, he is organizing special issues of *Clio’s Psyche* for 2009 and 2010 on “Remembering 9/11,” “The Psychological Dimensions of Health Care,” and “The Psychological Uses of Heroes, Mentors, and Role Models.” In June 2009, Professor Elovitz will be presenting a paper on President Obama’s first 100 days at the Conference of the International Psychohistorical Association at the Fordham University Law School. He also organized two meetings in Manhattan about an American artist and the psychological cost of war on our soldiers.

Niza Fabre recently published “Lo insólito de la transformación de la monja alférez: Dechado cultural de la mujer a principios del siglo XVII en España (The Astounding Transformation of the Nun Ensign: Women and Culture at the turn of 17th century in Spain)” in *Revista Literaria Baquiana*. She also wrote the prologue for *Poetas de hoy* (Poets of Today) (Publicaciones Culturales, 2008). In January, Professor Fabre was session chair for African-American Culture II: The Struggle for the Souls of Black Folks, for the 39th Annual Conference of the Popular Culture Association in New Orleans, LA. At the same conference, she also presented a

paper on, “Obeah: The Power of Religion.”

Risa P. Gorelick chaired the Research Network Forum (RNF) at the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) in San Francisco, CA on March 11, 2009. The RNF, which Gorelick has chaired since 1995, attracted more than 200 attendees and is the largest research organization in the field of composition and rhetoric. In addition to plenary addresses, the RNF is best known for its grouping of thematic round tables where researchers share their projects at intimate tables of 4-6

Where in the World are the AIS Faculty?



This map highlights the geographic reach of Ramapo’s AIS Faculty. Research areas are highlighted in Ramapo Maroon.

scholars in a workshop setting. Participants also meet with journal and press editors in hopes to publish their work. Gorelick also presented a paper, “Argument Writing in a *Fast Food Nation*,” at the Conference. At CCCC, she participated in the newly launched “Everybody Has a Literacy Narrative: What’s Yours?” project sponsored by the Digital Archives on Literacy Narratives which is collecting audio, video, and written narratives dealing with literacy. She brought the project to Ramapo College by staging a similar event on April 15, 2009

on campus. She also assisted Pearson publishing on a new podcast endeavor on pedagogical issues related to writing while at CCCC.

James Hoch’s poems are forthcoming in *American Poetry Review*, *New England Review*, *Virginia Quarterly Review*, *Court Green*, *32 Poems*, *Luna* and *Poetry International*, and in the anthologies: *From The Fishhouse* and *Jersey Poems*. This year, he will be a visiting writer at Rutgers University-Newark, University of Virginia, Virginia Commonwealth University, and Bucknell University.

Iraida Lopez presented “Secretos, diarios y diáspora: Madres e hijas en *Loving Che*, de Ana Menéndez (Secrets, Diaries, and Diaspora: Mothers and Daughters in *Loving Che* by Ana Menéndez)” at the annual congress of the Asociación Internacional de Literatura y Cultura Femeninas Hispánicas held at Agnes Scott College in Atlanta, Georgia, in October 2008. She organized a

panel for the XXVIII International Congress of the Latin American Studies Association, Rio de Janeiro, in June 2009. Her presentation will focus on Chilean folklorist Violeta Parra. Her article on Cuban American women’s self-referential writings appeared in the volume *Negotiating Identities in Art, Literature and Philosophy: Cuban Americans and American Culture* (SUNY Press, 2009) edited by Isabel Alvarez-Borland and Lynette Bosch. Her interview with Cuban

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AIS ORGANIZATIONS

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The **Philosophy Club** and **Student Activities Platinum Series** teamed up this spring to present “The Office and Philosophy.” Students met in an ongoing book club and film series, watching episodes of “The Office” and discussing its philosophical import.

Photo: Rosetta D'Angelo



On October 17, 2008, members of Il Circolo Italiano and Rosetta D'Angelo were selected to attend the 33rd Annual Convention and Gala in Washington, DC, where they met former NYC Mayor Rudy Giuliani.

With the **Platinum Series** support, the **Spanish program** presented Contemporary Maya Culture, a lecture and slide presentation by Caryn Maxim, followed by a cooking demonstration.

Ira Spar delivered a lecture for the **History Club** entitled, “Beyond Babylon: Art, Trade and Diplomacy in the Second Millennium B.C.”

AIS Film Series

The AIS Film Series (left) continued this year with five films, each presented by an AIS faculty member followed by lively student discussions—*Nanking* (**Tae Yang Kwak**), *Much Ado About Nothing* (**Yvette Kisor**), *Unforgiven* (**Stephen Rice**), *Supersize Me* (**Risa Gorelick**), and *Fresa y Chocolate* (**Iraida Lopez**).

Alternative Spring Break in the Highlands of Guatemala

Iraida López led a student group in an alternative spring break program to the highlands of Guatemala. This year’s trip was superior to the successful pilot program we launched last year. After visiting the towns of Antigua and Quetzaltenango as well as the Iximche ruins, students painted an elementary school and did arts and crafts projects with the children in Cajolá, the community that hosted their visit. They also learned about Maya Mam culture and cosmovision. A transnational community group, Grupo Cajolá, was in charge of organizing the itinerary in conjunction with the Cahill Center. □

Posters from the 2009 AIS Film Series



Students grinding maize for tortillas in Cajolá, Guatemala (below, left); Ramapo student Christopher Doyle making maracas with the local children (below).

Photo: Iraida Lopez

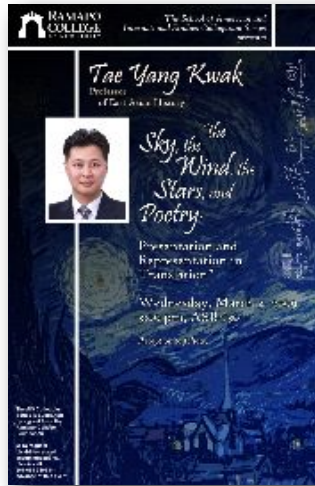


Photo: Iraida Lopez



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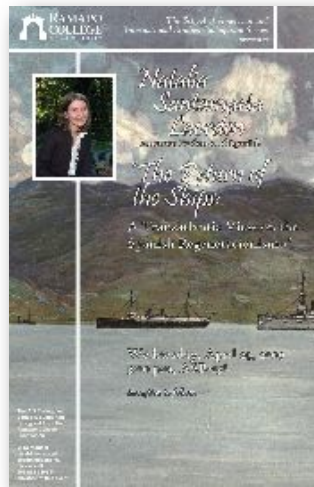
fiction writer Ena Lucía Portela was included in *The Portable Island: Cubans at Home in the World* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), edited by Ruth Behar and Lucía Suárez. She was also invited to be the faculty advisor for the Association of Latinos Moving Ahead (ALMA), a new student organization, dedicated to advancing Latino students' interests on campus and doing outreach to Latino communities.



Yvette Kisor's essay "The Aesthetics of *Beowulf*: Structure, Perception, and Desire" will be published in the volume *On the Aesthetics of Beowulf and Other Old English Poems* edited by John M. Hill, forthcoming from the University of Toronto Press. She also presented a paper "*Beowulf*: A Tale of Blood, Heat, and Ashes: A Children's *Beowulf* for the Tolkien Generation" in the session *Beowulf* as Children's Literature at the Forty-fourth International Congress on Medieval Studies at Western Michigan University. In addition, she presided over the panel on "Teaching Tolkien: A

Roundtable" and participated in the panel "In Honor of Tom Shippey II: J.R.R. Tolkien— Author of the Next Century?" at the same conference.

Tae Yang Kwak (left) and Natalia Santamaria-Laorden (below) both gave presentations for the AIS Colloquium Series. Ira Spar presented at the History Club (below, right) and other venues.



Carter Jones Meyer (on sabbatical leave) was invited to participate in a symposium in Santa Fe, NM marking the 100th anniversary of the Museum of New Mexico, one of the largest state museum systems in the country. She was part of a roundtable discussion on the legacy of Edgar Hewett in New Mexico. Hewett was the founder and first director of the Museum, and the subject of Meyer's current research on the formation of regional identity in the American Southwest during the early twentieth century.

Ed Shannon served as a panel chair on American Literature at the New Jersey College English Association in Orange, NJ in March 2009. At the same meeting, he presented "He Says He Didn't Say It": Magic and Realism;

Presence and Absence in Donald Barthelme's *The King*." This summer, he will present "Our clothes are a lie": Disguise and Christian Typology in Pudd'nhead Wilson at the American Literature Association Annual Meeting in Boston, Ma. Professor Shannon has been presenting a lecture series entitled, "The Jewish Roots of the Graphic Novel" at the Milburn Public Library. He

Also hosted a book discussion group on campus on Alan Moore and Dave Gibbon's *Watchmen*.

Ira Spar delivered a paper on "New Insights on the Origin of Writing" at the Mid-Atlantic World History Association meetings in Bellville, MD in October 2008. During November and December, he delivered numerous public and private lectures on the Metropolitan Museum Exhibit, "Beyond Babylon." In January and February 2009, he presented seven readings of his new children's story, "Marduk, King of the Gods," to audiences at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. March 2009 saw him in Israel where he gave four lectures on the Archaeology of Biblical Israel in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.



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Jeremy Teigen presented results from an SBR-funded experimental study on congressional elections and perceptions of issue competence at the Southern Political Science Association. He was also invited to speak on a panel at the Eagleton Institute of Politics at Rutgers regarding the upcoming New Jersey gubernatorial election, and elected as an executive committee member of the New Jersey Political Science Association.

At the Annual Meeting of the Southern Political Science Association, **Michael Unger** presented his research in a paper entitled, "Opinion Leader or Agenda Setter? The Influence of U.S. Supreme Court Cases and Partisan Elite Cues on Public Opinion." In April, he presented a paper at the Annual Meeting of the Midwest Political Science Association entitled "The Supreme Court and Elections: Benefits, Costs and Implications of Making the Court a Campaign Issue." Professor Unger also served as a chair and discussant for a panel on perceptions of judicial fairness and legitimacy at this conference.

Lisa Williams received a grant from the NJ Meadowlands Commission to have "Goofball Galaxy," a children's story, co-authored by her and her son, Sam Jacovitz, performed as a children's play at the Meadowlands Environmental Center next Fall 2009. Knighthorse Theatre Company will direct and perform the play. Professor Williams will be reading from her manuscript, *Forget Russia*, at the ARM/Mamapooloza Research on Mothering Conference in NYC on May 30th. She will also read at the Wellfleet Public Library on July 20th in Massachusetts. □

Activities of the Dean

Dean Hassan M. Nejad helped organize the AIS World Language Symposium, which was held in April (flyer pictured below).

Dean Nejad will also be reporting to the RCNJ Board of Trustees on the faculty, students, curriculum, sponsored events, and accomplishments of the School of American and International Studies for the AY 2008-2009 on June 15, 2009.

In collaboration with and assistance from the Institutional Advancement Office, the first meeting of AIS Alumni Advisory Board will be held on June 24th on the Ramapo College campus. Several AIS faculty members will be attending this meeting, and Dean Nejad will make a report. The Board will review by-laws and develop plans for future activities related to its goals and objectives. □



Gourevitch

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Gourevitch, whose topic was Human Rights and Genocide: The Past Century's Lessons for Better and for Worse, considered what the world, particularly the United States, has learned since the Holocaust about confronting genocide. Regrettably, he

has come to the conclusion that, even with the best will in the world, intervening to prevent the kind of killing that took place in Rwanda, or is currently occurring in Darfur, is usually just not feasible. There are deep underlying political or other reasons why one group seeks to annihilate or displace another group.

To believe that the United States, even in concert with the United Nations and its allies, has the will or means to put a stop to such heinous acts from taking place once they are under way is at best wishful thinking. Governments only act in such matters, according to Gourevitch, when their vital interests are at stake. The veto power of the five permanent members of the Security Council, he pointed out further, almost always stymies immediate action when a genocidal is actually occurring.

Named editor of *The Paris Review* in 2005, Gourevitch also is a staff writer for *The New Yorker*. He received the 1998 National Book Critics Circle award, the Los Angeles Times Book Prize, the 1999 Guardian First Book Award and the George K. Polk Award for Foreign Reporting for *We Wish to Inform You*.

The lecture was supported by a grant from the Gumpert Foundation, and was the first given in memory of William K. Gumpert, a California attorney and longtime Center benefactor who passed away in 2007. Established under a bequest before his passing, the foundation fosters a series of initiatives in genocide and human rights education.

The event was sponsored by the Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies and was held in conjunction with the Ramapo Lecture Series: "Diversity Perspectives in 21st Century" and the School of American and International Studies Colloquium series. □

Student Awards
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☀ Ramapo College student Nicole Duvall’s essay titled “Conquering Nature” won the 2009 College English Essay Contest. The contest was judged anonymously and was open to any Ramapo College student who received a grade of “A” on a paper written in a College English course during the 2008/2009 academic year. Ms. Duvall wrote her essay concerning the writings of astronomer Carl Sagan and nature writer Annie Dillard in Professor Patricia Ard’s fall, 2008 College English course. “Nature makes us feel small,” Ms. Duvall wrote, “so we try to control it, and bring it down to our size.” Ms. Duvall received \$100.00 for her winning essay. □



Photo: Patricia Ard

Ramapo student Nicole Duvall receiving award from Dean Nejad

AIS Student Internships at Christie’s

By Stephen Rice

This past year two AIS students, Suzanne Chapman (American Studies) and Holly Lund (History), worked as interns in the Trusts, Estates, and Appraisals Department at Christie’s New York, one of the world’s oldest art auction houses. Each worked for more than 10 hours a week—Holly in the fall, and Suzanne in the spring—at the Christie’s offices in Manhattan, helping with the various tasks



Source: Wikipedia Commons

Christie’s New York

involved in identifying and cataloguing estate items for auction. Holly learned about the internship last year, after being encouraged to look into the auction house field while taking an art history course. She found the work to be very interesting, in part because of the interactions with the other specialty departments at Christie’s, including the Old Master Paintings Department and the Musical Instrument Department. Suzanne, who had also been taking art history courses, learned about the internship from Holly and worked at it two days a week for most of the spring semester through the Cooperative Education Program. Both agree that this has been an excellent internship opportunity. □

AIS Student Interns Uncover Trading Post Objects to be Exhibited

By Erica D’Elia

Driving north on Route 202, there is a stone house, built around 1750. It marks the potential site of a trading post between Indians and Europeans established by Blandina Bayard in 1700. The house was once part of Ramapo College, serving as the President’s house and, later, as a dorm. This semester, working under archaeologist Ed Lenik, his

colleague Nancy Gibbs, and Ramapo professors Tom Dunn and Charles Carreras, fellow student Kristen Norbut, and I cataloged artifacts from an archaeological dig done on the site in 1980.

Through the course of the internship we learned how to identify artifacts, including prehistoric Indian materials, colonial pieces, and items from the present. Interns worked on classifying ceramics, stone tools, and projectile points as well as coins and buttons. Most importantly, we found eight glass beads that were made by Europeans and traded to the Indians, and the handle of a trade knife, which also shows evidence of intercultural contact in the area. The group also visited several nearby rock shelters where Indians lived and camped.

The Ramapo Indians have had a continued presence in this area from prehistoric times up to the present. This study helps us understand the relations between Europeans and Indians during the contact period. The objects found at the Laroe-Van Horn House (pictured left) help to tell this story. Look for them on display at the Mahwah Museum (201 Franklin Tpke.; 201-512-0099) this fall. □



The Laroe-Van Horn House

Source: McMahon, Reginald. *Indian Trading Post to State College*. Mahwah, N.J.: Ramapo College of New Jersey, 1977. Thanks to Christina Connor for locating this image.

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Prof. Natalia Santamaria Laorden (left) with the Spanish Club

MEET THE NEW DEAN
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AIS CLUBS
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Dean Nejad (right) with Dr.

Photo: Jon Franco, CIDE (Centro Internacional de Estudios de España)

**Meet AIS's New Dean,
Dr. Hassan M. Nejad**



Ask about the Latino and Latin

Prof. Carter Jones Meyer (right) and the



Contact Iraida H. López at
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